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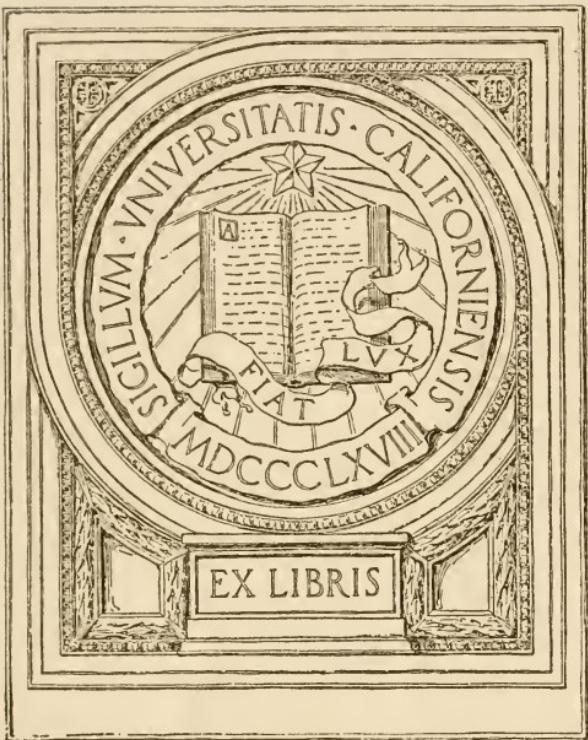
Poems of  
New England  
*and* Old Spain



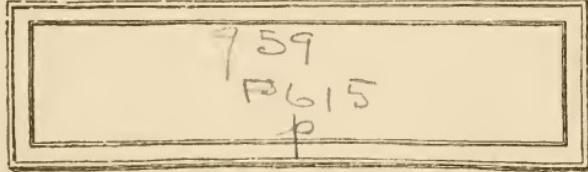
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POEMS OF NEW ENGLAND  
AND OLD SPAIN



POEMS  
OF NEW ENGLAND  
AND OLD SPAIN

*By*

FREDERICK E. PIERCE



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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE author of the following poems was raised on a small New England farm, which he worked and managed from his fifteenth to his twenty-first year. Then he went to college and ultimately became a member of a university faculty. If the academic and rural points of view occur here in unusual juxtaposition, the writer can only say that he has given life as he has found it. The last poem draws its framework and thought from historical reading, but its emotional coloring from the psychology of Puritanism in rural New England. The author has not tried to follow the rustic vernacular as closely as Mr. Frost because in all the present writer's New England poetry the speakers are persons widely read, usually of university training, who are recalling long past experiences on farms. In real life such people would not speak in all respects like typical farmers. Also we believe that the following of the vernacular, good and wholesome as it is, can be carried too far.

## Prefatory Note

The aim of a poem is to reproduce, not a phrase, but a mood, the reproduction of the phraseology being merely a means to an end. The mood created by a living speaker results only in part from his language. In part it is also due to his facial expression, tone of voice, and other factors ; and when these other factors are not reproduced something may be required in the language to suggest the general atmosphere.

F. E. P.

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POEMS OF NEW ENGLAND  
AND OLD SPAIN



## THE STORY OF A SELF-MADE MAN

I stood in twilight near the Self-made Man  
Beside De Musset's grave, blueblooded heir  
Of all he voiced, and was, and threw away.  
The willow tree his wish had planted there  
Gave half inaudible sighing; and below,  
That face, the guttered candle passion burned,  
Spoke marred and haggard. Aliens, yet a-kin,  
The Self-made Man and marble image met,  
One family's rising, one's descending day,  
In glory of twilight both, but round their brows  
Ghosts of dead hope for night and ashen cloud.

Atlantic winds from far horizons turned  
Soft keys in doors of thought; new ties grew ours,  
Of common country, hopes and griefs; and there,  
While shadows deepened round those foreign graves,  
My worn companion told me all his past.

Where the green ranges of the Berkshire Hills  
Roll dwindling through the southern lowlands, wild

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

In still and lonely loveliness, he grew,  
In old New England's poverty and pride.  
There childhood first baptized him dreamer from  
Wells deep in woods and mossy, where his valley,  
Hushed, beautiful, retired, with hinting voices  
Of brooks, and woods intoning through the winds,  
Bred visions natural as her herbs and flowers.  
Four fir-trees lined the path before his door,  
And two great Norway spruces, gloomy and high,  
That shed like needles from their myriad limbs  
The stern, sad, mystic musings of the North  
Round that child head. Dark on the western hill  
Against the azure one great pine-tree loomed,  
Almost across the sunset, having power,  
One might believe, to see and know what lands  
That sun arose on through New England's night.  
Those trees were teachers, filling infant hours  
With moods deep, solemn, incommunicable,  
That men remember sadly. Then the spell  
Of books wrapped heaven and earth with witchery.  
Alone among high, thinly peopled hills,  
Through leafy orchards framed with billowing  
meadow

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

Their broad, white-gabled farmhouse peeped. There  
children

Would hail like sails on ocean's rim the page  
Bringing them tales of far off towns and times,  
And moods and music. Though his boyish mind  
Missed half their thought, truths dimly comprehended,  
Beauties that lingered half unveiled, and glimpses  
Of wider life, the arena and the vision,  
Shook all his heart; as when, one drizzling night,  
A night that Coleridge might have loved, or Poe,  
Each nerve enthralled, he read their writings first,  
Raven and Rime, dread chamber, haunted sea.  
The room lay still, the household locked in sleep;  
The great, dark spruces moaned in night and rain;  
The air was vital round with mystic life,  
Wild melody and crowding form; and thoughts  
More strange than albatross or raven nested  
On picture-frame and mirror.—Pure first love,  
The treasured volume, virgin bride of youth,  
Unspoiled delight, that time renews for none.

So fourteen years went by, humble but happy.  
His father's death came then, want, brooding fear.  
The light was dark which their small, lonely world

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Had walked beneath, their house's pillar fallen.  
Heavily the care of that sad home  
Crushed those young shoulders. Thrust from dream-  
land's grotto  
Suddenly, roughly into day, he stood,  
Blinking in that uncomprehended glare  
Of sordid pains and plodding scrutiny;  
Drudging alone at labor never learned;  
None to rely on, none to give advice;  
And fear and poverty behind his heel,  
Their shadow falling still before his feet.

Stern, lonely, sad, the years that followed now.  
Not lonelier Selkirk's island proved than often  
That farm he tilled, where times in very truth  
God seemed not there to be. Day after day,  
While growing skill and hardening body woke  
The somber pride New England hardships breed,  
He hewed and delved. Hour after hour the wind  
Bent the same weed in the same curve; the crow  
Hour after hour in jangling monotone  
Called from the wood. Or if some neighbor came,  
His only neighbor, only one who came,  
A white-haired pastor, on whose virtues fate

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

In irony laid the woes of broken powers,  
The boy grew lonelier. Love had braced, he knew,  
Those feeble limbs; and yet that darkened mind,  
Forcing his growing thoughts to look on life  
Through its own misery and distorted glass,  
Made solitude relief, when once again  
The fallow brain in dead negation sank,  
To tune of creaking yoke and ring, or spell  
Of plodding hoof and endlessly turning sod.

Yet glad vacations met him also, days  
Of lightening labor, lessening care and fear.  
Then through the beauty of that lovely valley,  
A Clive through India's treasure-house, he trod,  
Where golden-rods like scepters of old kings  
Waved thick around, or woods in autumn wore  
More wealth than crowned Mogul. Much else was  
there:

Pink cones of hard-hack nodding in the breeze  
On lonely acres, red, autumnal ivies  
Dabbling like blood the cedar's dusky bosom;  
Old dooryard trees, portly and neighborly,  
And softly garrulous in summer's wind;  
Or shaggy knolls of pasture, warm with sun,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Where the shy strawberries blushing wait their lovers.  
All these became his friends; and often in them,  
Like thoughts round reptile foot-prints found in  
stone,\*

He wove the intangible, heard spirit voices  
Inaudible yet clear as fairy horns.  
Grave elders of the night expounded God  
From star-illumined, lettered rolls of heaven;  
And veiled, unshapen, golden-tresséd hopes,  
That lay on far horizons, chin on hand,  
Looking through distance, framed his valley. And  
often

The friend of other days, no longer changed,  
Came like Alcestis back through reason's world,  
Kindly and learned. Then round their talk for hours  
Ghosts of old saurian monsters walked the hill  
Now heaped above their bones, or tragic verse  
Kept time a-field to hoes on clinking stones;  
Philosophy's long hunt went questing by,  
And history called from many a kindred past.

So, wrapped in cloud but golden-tinged, went by  
The molding years whose labors none undo

---

\* The foot-prints of prehistoric birds or reptiles in the red sandstone of Connecticut.

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

For good or ill, the hardening, deadening years,  
That yet had taught delight in labor, joy  
In planning and doing and helping God create.  
And though his life was always lonely, lonely,  
Though charm and knowledge of the changing world,  
The sweet free-masonry of our healthy youth,  
Dried up within him, while he felt it die,  
Yet often on the silent hills he met  
What David, Paul, and white-haired Oisin found  
In deserts only; drew more near to Him  
Who is “alone from all eternity”;  
Heard seldom the sweet rhythm of speech, but heard  
The rhythm of rivers, winds, and soushing trees,  
Till thought and word grew timed to rhythm of theirs;  
And dreamed high dreams, and vowed with lifted  
hand,  
This clumsy plowboy, clumsy even in plowing,  
To make his life a proof that drudging poor  
Can walk with Milton’s mood and Raphael’s vision;  
And so lived on, and grew from boy to man.

Then patient plans brought liberty at last,  
Wide earth before him, vistas, calling voices,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Thronged avenue, foamy sea, and moon-lit trail;  
And eager though poor, a glad free-lance,—he came.

Through changing homes and changing work he wan-  
dered;

In wintry shacks with mountain hunters heard  
Weird elves in winds and gnomes that mine the snow.  
Where huge sky-scrappers heave a hill of stone  
Above some harbor dark with mast and funnel  
He drudged, competed, dreamed. Or westward  
where,

A crashing tower, the great sequoia fell,  
Dashing to ground the limbs that stars had taught  
In days of Charlemagne, the traveler turned;  
Or dared Canadian snows; or heard by night  
The Texan cowboy lull his drove with song.

Before him, unattained, a dim mirage,  
Through hopes deferred and years of drudgery,  
moved

The cloud-Jerusalem of poetic thought;  
And somewhere between that and life's rough clay  
He heard a voice forever praising, chanting  
The firm reality, to build and plan,

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

And feed ourselves, and justify our being,  
Man's dream in harmony with the dream divine.

Then falling on his life a gentle hand  
Tuned jangling keys to music. Woman's love,  
And all around that name as aureole thrown,  
For him had haloed too some sweet girl face  
In far off boyhood once. But poverty,  
With iron grip that seemed unending, drove—  
As part of nursery hope and elfin tale—  
The dream from youth and manhood; taught too well  
What lonely labor, death of love and charm,  
Wait wedded lives where want is bridal guest.  
And the grave, nunlike fields and hermit hills  
Had grown his only mates and formed his moods.

So died for years the lyric hours of youth,  
The lilting loves, the hope on wing to fly,  
Yet woke reviving now when blond-haired dawn  
Called life to sunnier hopes in laughing May,  
Or April hours, when bud and leaf unfolding  
Hung delicate as the silken dress of brides.

Now love itself rose out of dreams of love,  
As rose its mother from her kindred sea,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

The love of life's late manhood, gravely sweet  
As autumn asters bred when winds are chill.  
As through a sultry valley from the sea  
Cool winds may breathe, and blowing steadily,  
Change nothing yet change all, while hot-browed  
plowmen

Feel peace in hearts that ached with longing, so  
That gentle presence when unheeded most  
Had influence; and when labor's hours were done,  
He felt it bringing with caressing touch  
Meaning and magic into barren days.

And now he thought the golden time began.  
A while to breathe and grow, shake from his brain  
The numbing weight and burrowing hand of care,  
Learn, think, and have his chance in life,—and then—

“Then”—Others' folly came, and failure came,  
The cry of families whom his ruin ruined.  
He rose to meet that long expected day  
Bowed, penniless, deep in moral debt, once more,  
As when a boy, his duty's plodding slave.

Alone at night he fought the question out,  
Smelt the damp vine and eyed the burning stars,

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

And cried to God: "All others live their life;  
And I, who all through golden boyhood made  
My life a living lie for others' needs,  
Have I no rights, whose humble prayer is only  
One fair day's work a day, a little leisure  
To give to beauty what others will to sin?"  
Against the dark the answering vision rose,  
That reason framed and conscience colored, showing  
The widow's home, the boy so like himself,  
Hoping great hopes that withered like his own  
Because of him. To feed the sense of beauty,  
Art, poetry, learning, social charm, and friends,  
By filching every one of these for life  
From that pale boy,—was that to dream his dream?  
A sleek, carnivorous tiger soul? Night waned;  
The morning kindled like a great resolve  
On hills that fronted God; and twelve long, hard,  
Soul-withering years went by,—and all was paid.

Once more the summer warmed the drowsing fields  
Around his childhood's home, where, worn and jaded,  
He found a haven of calm. The grass was green  
On paths that suffering feet had trampled bare;  
But room and heirloom still were eloquent

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Of bygone hours and friends; yet beautiful  
The boy's loved valley smiled to greet the man.  
Here all that once breathed want and labor now  
Was redolent of rest, of cares laid by:  
Green slopes that drowsed beneath an apple-tree,  
Their laps piled deep with ripe, forgotten fruit;  
Old fallen trunks like Barbarossa, dreaming  
Through time and mantled with their beard of briers;  
And meadows, pillow'd in whose downy depths  
The genius of the valley seemed asleep.  
Here many a mood relived that childhood's hour  
Saw bud and die. One castellated height,  
Its rocky ramparts fringed with evergreen,  
Rose near, from which in beauty's perfect curve  
The far horizon fell. A myriad hues,  
Faint, vague, but wondrous as the stormy bow,  
Played shifting round it; rosy-tinted clouds  
Laughed from beyond it; call of echoes came,  
And voices of old thoughts, that all day long  
Mused in some haunted gorge among the hills.

Once, lounging all alone in Sabbath calm  
In a brown stubble-field where memory raised  
A ghost of bygone boyhood plowing, plowing,

## The Story of a Self-Made Man

He thought of that untried enthusiast's vow  
To make his life a proof that drudging poor  
Can walk with Milton's mood and Raphael's vision;  
And felt the wings of utterance clipped, but still  
The mood, the hope, the glory and vision there.

And now the man those molding forces formed,  
To make or mar, in darkening Père Lachaise  
Gazed on De Musset, he whom others fed,  
Whose days were waste, whose verse the rainbow  
gleam

On passion's cataract foaming down to ruin.  
Cold starlight bathed the glimmering image. Hard,  
Touched with grim humor, curled the lip that weighed  
How much in tears the dead had cost the dead;  
And grimly sad, in pride of art and race,  
The bearded marble mouth returned the scorn.  
But moon and mist, in dim, millennial haze  
Enwrapping both, made either seem to smile;  
And I, who reverenced both and fathomed both,  
Behind the contrast found the kinship too.  
The bearded marble mouth seemed saying still,  
"Great man, perhaps; but poet, no"\*\*;

---

and yet

\* Grand homme, si l'on veut; mais poète, non pas.

—De Musset's "Après une lecture."

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

From wiser worlds De Musset's ghost went on:  
"Life, that made me great author, blasted man,  
Made you more man than genius. Welcome, brother,  
'One writ with me in sour misfortune's book.'  
Both warring better than men knew have found  
The foe too mighty, saved but what we could.  
Yet over us time's upward march goes on."

Atlantic winds from far horizons turned  
Soft keys in doors of thought; and Bethlehem stars,  
That westward lured the wayworn world so long,  
Above our own loved, darkened continent  
Bent, lamp in hand, to see what face was hers,  
If that to come or should they look for another.  
Old ghosts of art around the marble moved.  
Around the Self-made Man dim phantoms filed,  
Resembling yet transcending him, dream forms  
Of genius now unborn that yet might be,  
Should the dumb, vast, misled but kindly force  
Of our untutored race find voice at last.  
And Night, who holds the future's mystery, drew  
Her curtain close round famous dead in France.

## FATHER AND SON

Hark, the great eight-day clock begins on twelve,  
The hour when ghost and memory wake, the hour  
When all our modern realism fails  
To tear the magic robe from life we know  
As twenty years I knew these hills and fields.  
For me this old, dark, tumbling farmhouse, friends,  
Has phantom tenants raised by midnight's call,  
That smile a welcome. First one unfamiliar,  
Whose past I learned when all was past for him,  
Who year on year, denied the life he loved,  
Sowed, plowed, and harrowed, broke against his fate  
With brooding wrath, and died in middle age,  
Goes by and fades, fading before I learn  
If that dim other world has given him more  
Than bare New England. Then his buried son,  
The man I loved for years, comes pipe in hand,  
The genial crow's-feet round his eyes, and on him  
Dust of the furrow not the grave, and smiles.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

He was a calmer soul; his father's mood  
Smoldered perhaps, but never blazed in him.  
He fought through all our Civil War, and lay  
Wounded two days among Antietam's dead;  
But came back home to manger, scythe, and plow,  
Worked peacefully and married and grew old.

That lilac-scented lane was where he wooed  
His wife in girlhood; there through moonlit elms  
The church that made them one spires like a prayer.  
They asked no trip in foreign lands to crown  
Their bridal; through the hills they drove together;  
And two glad weeks beneath a roof that's gone  
Lived on the crest of that far range, whose dome  
Glows ghostly now beneath the climbing moon.  
The time was June; and all the fields that year  
Were daisies, daisies, blanched like wedding veils.  
On their white carpet trod his bride. Around them  
For miles on miles the laughing meadows crowding  
Waved snowy kerchiefs as they passed. And then  
They looked abroad from their high chamber, knowing  
The wonder of earth, the joy their bosoms found.

They built these walls for married years together.  
Some part of her that grew undying, clinging

## Father and Son

Around the home she made, with thoughts of her  
Haunts twig and withered leaf of all her vines  
When winter snows blow through them. She relives  
In every tree whose growth they watched together,  
Or flowering almonds round their porch, that nodded  
His welcome home at night so many a May.  
Here Fall by Fall they saw the maple flame  
And heap their turf with gold; here Spring by Spring  
The myriad-branched magnolia bloomed for her  
God's candelabra tipped with spirit fire.

Ten hours a day for years he worked a-field.  
But still life's wealth and mystic glory, hunted  
Through polar floe or sweltering India vainly,  
Walked here uncalled along his furrow. Voices  
Went down the branches of the windy woods;  
Life's rich aroma poured from breeze-blown buds.  
He mowed his meadows, where, like beauty's volume,  
Turned leaf on pictured leaf for kindling eyes,  
Pink plume and green, lily and queen-o'-the-meadow,  
A million grasses of a hundred kinds,  
And each a world, above the chattering knives  
Kept bowing, bowing. Tired in sweaty heat  
He ate beneath some ancient elm whose limbs

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Had shielded sachems in the Indian wars,  
And murmured out of immemorial years  
Dead rapture, hope, and sorrow. Turf untoned  
Since man was born his coulter tore, and heaved  
From the dark rest of centuries into day  
Life-giving mold, at times quaint fossil shells  
More old than man; or down the furrow slipped  
Flint arrowheads of buried Indian braves.  
And, always changing, through the boundless heaven  
The great sun climbed, the muttering tempest rolled,  
The swallow skimmed the grass, and fragrant winds  
Brought airy syllables from beyond the hills.

Then sorrow came; above the face he loved,  
Locking him out, the doors of death clanged to.  
Haggard that day he walked familiar fields;  
And where all once gave warm companionship  
Of calling bird and breathing vine, all now  
Was lonely, lonely past the speech of man.  
Lonely above him curved the vacant sky  
Where God had seemed enthroned; earthy and dead  
Lay the dull landscape, where the hollow wind,  
A dying emanation from dead worlds,  
Went wandering vaguely into nothingness.

## Father and Son

Yet that dread, lonely farmer's life, where hearts,  
More tired than words can tell, keep vainly heaving  
The thought that still rolls back through empty days,  
Has its own healing. Stars from wide mid-heaven  
Beyond the reach of mortal loss and law  
Looked down and signaled comfort. Grave and  
meadow

Were clothed with life, green blade and running vine,  
A breathing universe of life, where death  
Seemed dead, forgotten, buried under flowers.

And so that man became the one I knew,  
One commonplace yet noble. He had built,  
Like Dido, and beheld his walls. Alone,  
In that calm life where none compete or cringe,  
He dreamed his dream till it took flesh and form  
And dwelt with men; his dream, those fertile fields  
Reared up by him from swamp and underbrush,  
Feeding the world and beautiful to see.

Part of himself he sowed there; part of him  
Relives when every year his orchards bloom.

An only son remained from married days,  
A helpless comfort first and helper soon;  
Then full of promise, yet a growing care.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

For hours at times the older man would sit,  
And shake his head, and think in that young face  
He found a look he knew but never wore.  
And more and more as manhood neared, the boy,  
Grown sad and restless, leaned on bar or plow,  
With idle hand and heart too tense for toil,  
Stood gazing past the landscape's burning rim,  
Captive, while fleets of flaming clouds went bearing  
Columbus visions through the untraveled night.

At last the great deciding moment came.  
On yonder hill by that great oak, whose roots  
Grip like the talons of the fabled roc  
The turf deep, green, and centuries old, they sat,  
Father and son. Above the old man leaned  
The patriarch tree, mossed thick with memories  
Of that one spot; cool through the young man's hair  
An ocean wind blew on, that restlessly  
Sought for new lands. Before them yawned the valley,  
With field of shimmering grain and plunging stream,  
Slow moving plow and foliage-curtained home.  
Their words to me down hushed and airy heights  
Blew with the billowing wind, which mixed and  
mingled

## Father and Son

Old bygone longings, moods of high and low,  
That gave, perhaps, my language statelier ring  
Than theirs; but well my spirit heard their souls,  
And through them many an ancient anchorite  
Or knight that buckled spur, myself as well,  
For I, like one, long since had loved my fields,  
Yet like the other beaten against the pane  
For landscape vast and ruddier life beyond.

The boy kept urging: "Father, let me go.  
For years I've helped you; now I'm man at last.  
My future calls me; earth and ocean call me,  
Vast mines in mountains half a world away,  
Great ships with foreign funnels dropping down  
In the still twilight, bound for twilight lands."  
Over and over the father answered sadly  
That choice was free but happiness was here;  
Then spoke of all that life had meant for him  
In that one valley, peace past understanding,  
Calm days, and love of one now buried there.

A silence followed. Both their eyes together  
Sought the low ridge where, dark with hemlock  
fringes,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

And flecked with marbles white against the green,  
The churchyard lay. Far off a farmer's call  
Rose dreamily, then a heifer's lazy low.  
But clear and mellow through the miles of air  
Whistled a distant train; and yet again,  
Farther and farther through the echoing hills,  
And always hurrying into lands unknown,  
The sound rose dwindling. Answering that dying  
summons  
The boy's deep longing surged in words again.

"It makes my brain whirl round like fever, father.  
Like urging friends the blue hills bend and beckon;  
And farther, vaster, through a waiting world  
Loom lives, achievements, thoughts I never shared.  
By night and day I hear their voices calling,  
Calling across the misty morning pastures  
Through gaps in ranges looking seaward, calling  
When birds fly by to Alabama, calling  
When stars from Asia glance at us and go.  
There men find rapture, find what lives allow;  
There new inventions rock the world; and there  
Great armies march to wreck old tyrannies,  
While here I watch and stagnate. Let me go!"

## Father and Son

"Ah," said the old man, "just as echoes leap  
From cliff to cliff and skip the chasm between,  
So from dead ancestors old traits return,  
And leap the generations. Now I know you.  
You are my father's child, not mine; he burned  
His very life out here with smoldering longing.  
Yes, you shall have your will. And now your arm.  
Come, we'll go down and light our evening fire.  
But if a son should look into your face  
With eyes like mine when nothing lives of me  
But memories of an odd, obscure old man  
Who wasted years among our lonely farms,  
Think what in life I found, what he may find  
Who shares through you my nature;—and be wise."

They went their way; and left alone I gazed  
From that high summit, ringed with range on range  
Of fading peaks, now down the lovely valley,  
Then out in distance, where on sea and land  
Great nations whispered through the gathering night.  
The western glimmer lit when day had died  
Like Michael's falchion waved between that world  
And our calm stillness. Ghosts of other years  
Began to walk like winds the dewy grass,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

And light their hearth-fires in the twinkling stars.  
Now birds of night awoke with ancient trills  
Of Asian Eden, singing, "Home is heaven";  
Then sang a bird of Southland, "Earth is wide";  
And each alternate raised its own refrain;  
And each in turn heard echo answer "Ay."

The boy turned soldier, fought in wild campaigns  
On eastern islands, clove with fleets of steel  
The broad, blue, glittering waters of the West.  
Daily, like tread of hunted game in woods,  
Before him moved adventure's rustling feet;  
The unchanging constellations night by night  
Lit changing lands and darkly shifting seas.

The father went his old familiar ways.  
He heard the swallow twittering in the barn  
That housed his boyhood. Trim in ordered rows  
His orchards blossomed, beautiful as clouds.  
The cataract sang at night; in marshy runs  
The long green flags flapped lazily, dreamily still,  
As if man's hurrying hours were canceled there.  
On summer nights through meadows damp and dim  
The twinkling fireflies moved like fallen stars;

## Father and Son

The whip-poor-will shrilled upon some mossy rail;  
And nighthawks hunted through the whispering  
heaven.

Perhaps the man was lonely; often now  
On worn church step or dusty road or lane  
He held his neighbors talking of old days,  
Or news about his boy; but tranquilly  
His life flowed rippling through its calm green world.  
Once when the lad wrote home of wounds and praise  
He bared his aged breast, and curiously  
Eyed bayonet scars from half forgotten fields,  
Then pinned the letter next his heart, and went  
Among his calves through budding apple-trees.

So years with silent heart and seeing eye  
He walked with beauty old but ever new;  
Then died, and dying called a friend and said:  
“Now sell the farm; ‘twas happy ground for me,  
But never will be for him who’s flown the nest.  
Send him the money, send my blessing too;  
Say I died proud of such a son.” He kissed  
The letter from his boy and fell asleep.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

That blessing never reached the son. He fell  
In savage wars on alien islands, lay  
Dying of fever, want, and wounds for days.  
One burning midnight suddenly he rose,  
The reeling phantom of his manhood, stood  
Before his father's portrait, blade in hand;  
And then, saluting like a soldier, said:  
"I've come to say I've done my duty, sir,  
The way you told me." Sword in hand he died.

Three pictures hang along the parlor wall.  
Come here and see them. First, beyond the door,  
The dour old grandsire prisoned all his days,  
Who burnt his heart out like a smoldering fire.  
From that third frame the bold young victor leans  
Whom once a nation praised. And right between—  
There, lift the lamp and see the man I knew,  
In eye and forehead, face, and soul behind  
So like yet so unlike his father and son.

## THE FIRST HAY-STACK

He laid its round foundation first in fear,  
A nervous, trembling, inexperienced boy.  
Responsibilities that men would slight  
Weighed heavy on him. Two days he trod it down,  
And laid the sweet, ripe hill-grass tier on tier.  
Two nights it settled under moon and star.  
Returning twice through twinkling, dewy fields  
He found it round and firm, a grassy tower.

The third day came, the hired man shook his head:  
“You’ll never top it like your father did;  
You’ll leave a shoulder, rot a ton of hay.”  
“A ton!”—It loomed so big the boy turned white,  
And gripped his fork and climbed and took his place.

Then, always narrowing round him while he laid,  
And rising higher and higher in fragrant wind,  
Seeming to rock but proving firm, and level  
With swallow flying low and neighboring tree,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

He felt his handiwork beneath him grow.  
The hired man breathed; and slow the forkfuls came,  
Ruffled with wind. He trod them down, and high  
On his completed work he stood in air.

“Round as an egg,” he heard his pitcher call;  
“You beat the old man; here’s your ladder, slide.”  
He paused, and cast, before he slid, one glance  
From that high post on that high-throned hill-  
meadow.

Valleys he saw, and rivers flashing light,  
And other hills against the westering sun,  
Green, waving corn-field, yellowing oat-field, men  
Busy as he, whose lives seemed calling out  
In fellowship to him. Four miles around  
The town could see his work and know it good,  
His, the book-worm, the clumsy, dreamy boy,  
Who yet could work, had too his skill and power.

With loving hand he raked and combed it down,  
Still redolent from the meadow’s green romance,  
His treasure-heap of grass and flower and fern,  
Wild, fragrant herb and beauty-haunted blade

## The First Hay-Stack

From nine broad acres. Then he rode away,  
Eying it tenderly from the rattling cart.

Through milking time his eyes were on it still,  
Where high, far off, clean cut against the sky,  
It loomed among the smoldering clouds, till night  
Made Venus golden right above its peak.

The winter came ; and many a day he drove  
His creaking ox-sled through the crunching snow,  
Loaded with logs, along that wind-swept hill.  
There in the meadow, where round cold drifts clung  
The memories of the far off, warm July,  
Amid the bleak and lonely landscape rose  
The form he made, clean cut and pointed still,  
Hooded and cloaked with snow and blown by wind,  
Meeting the test of time. A human form,  
A friend amid the desolate waste, it seemed.

In March he drove his cattle there, unearthing  
With every wisp glad memories of the summer,  
The sweet, ripe June grass, clover bud and vine,  
And tall dried flower that half the long forenoon  
Had nodded friendly while the mower's knives

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Kept circling nearer. So his boyhood's triumph  
Melted and faded into boyhood's past.

Yet often now against the afterglow  
On some high hill he sees a haystack loom,  
With peak across the unearthly twilight, seen  
Against the afterglow of boyhood dreams,  
Of moods that set, but glimmer and dawn again.

## THE FARM-BOY

A young Yale senior, tramping hills that summer,  
First met him mowing, where a hillside meadow  
Looked up on clouds and down on brooks and valleys.  
The boy had stopped to let his horses pant,  
And oil the "buck-eye"<sup>\*</sup> under a cool, broad oak;  
And there they talked. Yes, both were fond of Burns.  
The farm-boy too had plowed his daisies under.  
"And Burns has helped me see it all," he said,  
"The beauty of meadows, when I'm sick of men."  
The senior smiled, kindly, as one who lifts  
A lower to his level, "That's not Burns.  
*The Jolly Beggars*, there's your Ayrshire farmer;  
For all that's best in literature, we've learned,  
Must draw from men, not fields." The farm-boy  
thought;  
Hard life had made him test such glowing terms.  
"Then, saying I were all I'm not, a Burns,  
You'd have me write of folks in Horton Hollow,

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\*The Adriance Buck-eye mowing-machine.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

And not their brooks and hills?" "I would, like Burns."  
"What holds at Yale might not in Horton Hollow.  
Take old Jim Andrews there, whose hay I'm cutting,  
He's kind and honest, but he has hypochondria.  
He'll make the talk at work or dinner take  
Such dismal ruts we thank the Lord for silence.  
He'd cause no love-songs. Hortons all have brains,  
But now they've mostly left. 'Lige Horton drinks,  
Not like your jolly beggars, but all alone  
Among his cider casks on winter nights.  
And Jane and Helen Horton live alone,  
Each one old woman in a big rambling house,  
Good women, so my mother said, but where  
Would Burns find Highland Mary? Andrew Weld  
Was crushed in falling from an apple-tree  
At twenty, when he planned to go to college.  
That left him sick nine years and wrecked for life,  
Poor, working when he wasn't fit, and brooding.  
A fine man once, but now he's like a funeral.  
And further north it all is Poles and Jews,  
Who're just machines to work and eat and save.  
That's life in Horton Hollow, human life.

## The Farm-Boy

"But landscape! look and see. I drive out here  
When worrying folks have put my nerves on edge,  
To placid cows and steers and great calm trees,  
And calm winds blowing over tranquil hills,  
And it's like heaven. I lift my head from work,  
And see that glorious wealth of color there  
In leaves and grasses, brooks and flowers and light.  
My father's dead; but often in haying time  
Under this oak I think it seems like him,  
A something manly, comforting, and strong,  
Better than folks I meet with. Then at night  
We smell these fields of clover damp and breezy;  
The moonlight makes the far off hills seem farther,  
And climbing stair on stair among the stars.  
Then, though I know what old Will Warren is,  
I see his house up there on Warren Hill,  
With moonlit orchards round it, turn to something  
Splendid, divine, not just Bill Warren's farm.  
I used to think when little once, the stars  
Dropped down at night among his apple-trees;  
And saw him mowing, grass one side his bar,  
White cloud the other. Poetry may be life;  
But life has corners college boys don't know,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Nor college teachers.” Here he whipped his team;  
And the bright knives went clicking through the grass,  
That flashed and twinkled, daisy, black-eyed Susan,  
And fox-tail tall and green, while fresh around him  
Cool winds like Homer’s wafted hope and health.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE AUTO-DA-FÉ

Beneath the never changing night, whose reign  
On altering earth brings ancient midnights near,  
On shadowy boards where lamps but light the brain,  
We stage the play that history wrote in fear.  
  
In ghostly orchestra the winds awake  
Wild notes that fraught with world-old wailing come;  
On heart and ear soul-haunting echoes break,  
Washed up by time from lips for ages dumb.  
  
Here darkened minds debate in terror and pain  
What way through gloom the blessed Pharos lies,  
Their sum of hope,—eternal loss or gain.  
  
And still as greatness, grief, and folly rise,  
With wasted love, love's wisdom voiced in vain,  
World-old experience down the wind replies.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

### I

*Here shall it seem as if two lovers meet under the stars in the place of the next day's execution. The woman speaketh.*

Oh love, we chose an evil tryst. I feel  
From sight and sound and hush of awe in air  
Day's horror haunt the waiting night. Who knows,—  
Remembering ghostly tales of nurse and nun,—  
But fiends, allowed by God, wait here, to seize  
The wicked souls of those who burn to-morrow?  
A cloud drove past the moon and holy stars;  
And the night wind, that blew from none knows  
where,

Like spirit fingers plucked my veil behind.  
Then bells among the great cathedral towers  
Rang heavy and hollow, as denouncing me,  
Who fled a father's house and will, they clanged,  
For love that may be sin. Through other scenes  
On this dear arm I thought to pass as bride.  
My merry maids are stakes in ominous file;  
My wedding favors fagots.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

*The man speaketh.*

Hush ! those bells

But rang in love's delightful year, or sounded  
Old Pedro's doom, who, foiled in all his hate,  
Burns here at dawn ; whose forfeit wealth turns ours,  
Making love possible. Not fiends but lovers  
Grip timid wives who wake to joy to-morrow,  
When on our marriage pillows morning laughs.  
Look, sweet. The moon but dons her filmy cloud  
As brides their veil, and through it smiles at you.  
And the night wind, made damp from stream and pool,  
Is blowing kisses, kisses everywhere.  
The priest is waiting; love is calling. Come.

*Here speaketh the night wind.*

I am the wind of night, blown hither from far Cathay,  
Where I cooled two leopard cubs as they rolled in the  
grass at play.  
They were warm from their banquet done, and they  
frisked in the moonlight clear,  
And found love in their mother's purr, that the buffalo  
quake to hear.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

And no thought had they of the life that had perished  
to make them glad.

I blew by the leopard cub, and I blow by the human lad.

## II

*Here shall the voice of a woman be heard praying  
before a shrine.*

Pure mother Mary, gentle, good Saint Anne,  
Ye two who saved a world by motherhood,  
Hear me, a mother. Kin, confessor, friend,  
All cry I sin in asking aid of you,  
When death is near and other aid is none,  
For foe of yours. As if my only boy,  
Whom like the Saviour once my bosom bore,  
Who loved the poor and kept my age from want,  
Were foe to you! Some frightful error here  
Needs you to light it, star of Bethlehem.  
Oh, if I sin the mother love that sins  
And shepherd-like pursues the wandering lamb  
Might be forgiven. Still he is my son,  
However those wicked books, that demon pens,  
I know, had traced, deluded him with lies.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

I found a child once wandering in a wood,  
Misled by owlet's hoot and will-o'-the-wisp,  
And pitying led it home. My boy is lost  
Where none on earth can lead him back; but you,  
Sweet Mother Mary, good Saint Anne, oh you  
Can save him yet and make him know the truth.  
The hours of night rush by; and dawn will bring  
The flaming stake, the jeering crowd, and frown  
Of stony monks, who say that hour of pain  
Is only porch to hell's unending fire.  
All power is yours with God and Christ; all love,  
Men say, is yours, the undying mother love.  
My heart is breaking; hear me; save my son!

*The night wind maketh her answer.*

I am the night, my daughter; round a million homes I  
blow.  
My every breath in the gloom is the groan of a  
mother's throe,  
Travail that earth may endure, may live to be nobler  
than now.  
And the life that you suffered to give us is burned like  
the oak's dead bough.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Oh creed that enthroned the mother where the tears  
of the ages ran,  
Is this all that you learned from Mary and the bones  
of good Saint Anne?

### III

*Here shall a sick man be heard as if at an open window.*

More air, more air! Can night's unplumbed abyss,  
That cools wide land and wild, untraveled sea,  
Not cool one fevered head? not even now,  
When hours decide the hope of all these years?  
A bishop's mitre gleams amid the gloom  
Beyond me and beyond me and beyond,  
Sliding along the moonlight, tempting me,  
Eluding still the feeble hand that fails  
When health might grasp it. Oh remain, remain!  
Am I not learned, encouraged, well approved  
In wisdom, toil, and fervor for the faith?  
Have I not given the church the lamb I loved,  
And watched in Heaven's fold, who stayed not there,  
And burns to-morrow, damp with tears of blood  
From me, like Isaac offered up of old?

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

What broke my heart should earn a mitre, yea!  
Yet on the ascending stair I feel it fail.  
Reeling and fainting at the goal, I hear  
The racing feet of rivals pass me by.  
Nay, courage, heart! this weakness cannot last.  
New life will stir with dawn, and all be well  
When I am strong, when I again am strong!

Yet how this fever, beating reason down,  
And calm-eyed conscience, fills my brain with mad,  
Abhorred illusions guilt alone should view.  
That seems Hernando, yet his cell's far off,  
And he alive, and not till one night more  
That ghost can come. But stood its image here,  
Bowed on the cross whose faith those lips denied,  
Could I not face it, laughing terrors down?  
Thou canst not call me traitor, thou who didst  
With blasphemy betray the faith of ages.  
Had I concealed the pestilent breath in thee,  
And made thy friendship more than Christ to me,  
Lied not to thee, and made a living lie  
Of every vow I took as priest,—oh then  
Well might I fear. God's flaming ministers  
Might walk my chamber then at night, and call

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

My harrowed soul to answer. Get thee gone,  
Charred phantom form, reproachful, lingering still.  
Thou'rt but delirium. All will yet be well  
When I am strong, when I again am strong!

Few days I lose, oh surely only few.  
And youth is mine, and many a friend in power.  
The climb begun, these feet may clamber far.  
The cardinal's hat might crown the mitre soon.  
And then,—who knows? for men as low as I  
Have found their seat in Peter's chair, and posed  
As God's high regent over lands and kings.  
This hand that now an ague shakes might live  
To shake an emperor from his throne; might live—  
And might not live—. Oh God All Merciful,  
Forgive my sins and call me not away.  
Let me be strong! let me again be strong!

### *The night wind answereth him.*

By your window flutters the robe of the oldest of  
priests alive;  
I call my sons to confession, and cold are the hands  
that shrive.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Each air that I wake is an echo of a bell that somewhere tolls;  
My cowl, like the Chase of Odin, is a cloud that is thronged with souls.  
Out of the night I come, from the dying on land and sea;  
And into the night I go, and the priest goes forth with me.

## IV

*Here shall come a voice as of a great prelate musing alone in a cathedral.*

Through the wide minster, faint and far between,  
The lamps gleam out like truth in error's gloom,  
At column's flank or foot of saint. All else  
Is darkness, with the hollow dome above  
Reëchoing silence to the silent nave.  
Now in that hush and dark as hallowed priest  
And kingly minister, reflect, my heart,  
Before the living die, before we make  
The hour's expedient lasting law in Spain.  
Four hundred years, propped on the corner-stone

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

That bears this massy pile, has God made here  
A home for men, asylum from their sin.  
Above my head, awful and grand and pale,  
Scarce half revealed in the dim shadow, leans  
The wounded majesty of Christ. To Him  
Must I give answer how I guard the Faith  
By which His agony redeems a world.  
Out there through wide, immeasurable night,  
By town and soaring peak and seas that wash  
Their human freight far off on unknown shores,  
The hearts breathe placidly that soon must know  
Infinite bliss or infinite despair.  
Ye darkened millions, pillow'd soft in sleep,  
Whose dread salvation weighs to-night on me,  
You must I answer how I shepherd you.

A mother's holy love with fearful power  
In pleading anguish fills a judge's ear;  
My own yet rings with it. But what of her,  
That other wife, whose child in coming years  
Through error's taint may die eternally  
If error's priest go free? And what of them,  
The unborn millions, who in endless pain  
May mourn too late forsaken faith, and cry:

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

"Most happy might we be in heaven now,  
Hadst thou, Ximenes, done thy duty then."

Lo, God, in night, the night of human mind,  
I stand; and round my feet the nations throng.  
No sun of perfect knowledge ever—no,  
Not while the world grew gray inquiring—lit,  
Or ever could, that darkened void, wherein  
On groping souls deluding planets gleam  
Age after age; no hope, no light, no truth.  
I hold in gloom the hand of one before,  
Who holds in gloom an older hand than his;  
And so in living chain we reach to One  
Who leads through night to certain day. Though near  
Unseen the lion howl, in token dread  
The dim gier-eagle drop the straggler's bone,  
To quicksands near that gulp and give not back  
Low siren voices call the fool, yet safe  
Behind that far off Guide our column goes,  
Where none may hope but that unbroken file,  
That, parted once, would doom the race. Live on  
Through Peter, Linus, pope and me, thou chain!

Yet quoth an upstart mob: "Oh world astray,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Let go of hands, and hurrying on alone  
Find what the fathers found"; or "Christ was man";  
Or "Walk with me by reason's polar star";  
And wandering on the wild, their guiding gleam  
Enswathed in cloud, they perish each and all,  
Whole lands in endless doom. No more of that!  
Here in the midst of this great woeful world,  
Under the image of that awful hour  
On Calvary, the flames beneath my feet,  
And Heaven above me, and eternity  
Peering disdainful on our nook of time,  
In loving hands I lift the crook of fear  
To guide my sheep to safety. Forth I go  
With will of adamant and heart at peace.

*The night wind sobbeth by the cathedral doors as the  
sound of footsteps passeth through them.*

I am the wind of night through eternity walking the  
sphere,  
Forever telling a truth too simple for man to hear,  
Wailing for needless battles and sobbing for needless  
crime,  
Damp with the tears of ages and sad with the wrongs  
of time,

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Still breathing the same mild lesson that lived in the  
Nazarene,

Haunted and broken-hearted by the thousand years  
between.

In my bosom I bear traditions that are old as the  
earth and sky;

I have seen how truth grew error in the lapse of the  
years gone by,

Round many a Calvary mountain where the good  
were crowned with thorn,

Where the brave on the cross were lifted and the veils  
of the temple torn.

Would ye listen and hear my message, your hatred  
would soon grow love;

But my voice is the voice of the wind, and ye hear but  
the sound thereof.

## V

*Now cometh a voice reëchoing as from the walls of a  
dungeon.*

Be bold, my will; one mighty wrench, and then,

Lo, heaven before thee and all pain behind.

Would man not gladly hold his hand in fire,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

While counting one, for life's brief glory and joy?  
Yet for each moment this poor flesh can feel,  
What never entered heart of man is mine.  
Oh trembling soul, nail there thy gaze, hold well  
That gleaming hope, and it shall make thee firm.  
Think when the square grows black before thine eyes,  
And thy racked nerves divide from pain forever,  
What light shall cleave the darkness, when thy hands  
Are gripped by angels, and thy ears are full  
Of welcoming words from martyrs of old days,  
Peter and Linus, and all those whose heirs  
Polluted that I died to purify.  
How will thy senses reel with that great joy!

Then through the echoing heaven by choir on choir  
Shall we be borne, and from the Almighty's throne  
Look down past filmy cloud and golden star  
On life and death, and God's love leavening all.  
There at our feet, now beautiful in sun,  
'Twixt flaming pillars of the dusk and dawn,  
Our world shall lie, and muffled now in shade  
And moonlight. From the groves of Araby  
Our eyes shall range to the wild Northern Sea,  
Past mountains cowled with everlasting snow,

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Vineyards, cathedrals, lakes wherein the sun  
Flames, a fire-opal. Voices we shall hear  
Where the old note of anguish dies away,  
And men are glad and faith is pure. Then we  
Shall look into each other's deathless eyes,  
And whisper, "From our death their blessings grew."

In churches' twilight choirs we'll walk with men,  
Breathing pure fancies through a mind at prayer,  
That wonders why they came. Down minster aisles  
May we like cooling winds with airy hand  
Usher the living into truths of love.  
Then children, knowing not what dead are near,  
May read our names on page or pane, and ask,  
"Who then were these?" while reverend priests reply,  
"Martyrs for you and this pure faith of ours."

The sands run on; the faster that they run  
The nearer heaven am I. Yea, in the dusk  
Methinks I hear the beat of angel plumes,  
And voices crying, "Courage, what is time  
Beneath eternity?" Above me sound  
The keys of heaven; the sweet, glad notes blow down;  
And through the dark that voice that from the dark

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Called up creation, cries, "Let there be light."  
Now wavering dreamer with the fire before thee,  
Be brave; thou diest beneath the Almighty's eye.

### *The night wind museth with itself.*

Out of the night I come, and into the night I go.  
I have seen so many a heart put forth through the  
midnight so.  
They were brave in the strength of a dream; have  
they found it or waked to rue?  
Or can dream so bravely dreamed through courage  
grow something true?  
I hope; but I blow round earth, God's footstool and  
mortal's grave,  
And no voice from the throne tells me of the millions  
that dreams made brave.

## VI

### *Now reëchoeth a voice as from another dungeon.*

Midnight is past; day comes, and earth has end.  
I thought I faintly heard your songs and prayers,  
Doomed fellow souls, whom faith assures of God

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And heaven at sunset. No such hopes are mine.  
Hollow, unchanged, my oracles reply  
In terror's hour as leisure's, No man knows.  
Cling on in hope, poor hearts ; but mine must wear  
Less visionary arms, in sterner mail  
Front certain pang and all uncertain doom.  
Yet even in flame almost a man might smile  
To think my foes, who laughed me down, send me  
To win from death the proofs confuting theirs.  
Shall I not laugh in his dim realm when they,  
With long, chopfallen face and rueful, hear  
That grim logician answer even as I ?  
And something of the bold discoverer's thrill  
I feel, and curious even in dread enquire :  
What shores draw nigh? in what strange hostellie,  
My soul, sojourn'st thou one brief night from now?

But fearful is the price I pay, who lose  
This living, warm, unquestionable life,  
To learn what random prize the blind abyss  
May give the brave. The irrevocable gate  
Being passed, I might lapse in eternal naught ;  
And the glad hours that were to fill with friends,  
Faces of children, laugh of love, and glow

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Of sun and wine and leisure in the veins,  
And hounds of thought glad-eyed in trailing truth,  
And ever new delight to see the sun  
Paint cliff and castle tower with morning fire,—  
All these might prove but dead oblivion's price.  
Or life continuing void of thought, as herb  
And plant endure, in nature reabsorbed,  
This whilom eager brain might branch and bud  
Amid the woodland, where no joy or grief  
Could stir me more, and from some gray old oak  
Rustle above my children's children's head,  
Unknown to them or me. And conscious life  
Instead of love might bare the fangs of fear.  
For down some chaos of a shattered brain  
With ghosts in endless ages might I walk,  
Once loosed from all the laws that guard us here.

Why spread my sails then through that timeless night  
When safe and soft my days might laugh on shore?  
Why not recant? Because within my soul  
Is God, if none be in the gloom without.  
Within my bosom burns that lamp of thought  
By spirit fathers lit and left to me,  
Cleaving our night to truths afar, with pure

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And calm aroma lulling minds of men  
To moods of nobler life. Burn still, thou lamp.  
Be it pride or duty, love or stubborn will,  
I quench thee not with lies but hand thee on,  
That worlds made free may think and learn and grow.

Then courage, heart, thou playest a noble rôle.  
And after all that dear, consoling dream  
Of heaven, unproved, is undisproved as well.  
But pin not there thy hopes ; and sure thou art  
Never in flesh to see the coming men  
For whom thou diest, nor will they know thee,  
Nor ever hear thy name, nor mark thy grave.  
So much for earth. Beyond I only know  
Through darkling seas of doubt, from horror's pier,  
Unpiloted, uncheered, with chance I go ;  
But never, come what will, can be condemned  
To loathe myself and smirk in cringing fear.  
'Tis well. At sunset I shall be with God,  
Or else the one true godlike thing that was.

*The night wind whispereth to him.*

I am the night wind blowing from a western ocean  
now,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Where a thousand leagues the waves are uncloven by  
human prow.

By the ocean currents borne where the whale from the  
kraken flies,

Old wrecks float half way down that no longer can  
sink nor rise.

Through the vast, dim gulfs below look the white-  
ribbed crew a-stare.

Where the living have never been I have blown, and  
the dead are there.

But the stars look down above and they quiver as if  
alive;

And the ocean winds are a voice, and the ocean cur-  
rents drive;

And the coral temples grow on the rock that no  
storm overthrew;

And the cliffs of the deep give rest to the wing of the  
wild seamew.

Where the living have never been and the lips of the  
dead are sealed,

Dimly I glimpsed the truth of a God and His love  
revealed.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

### VII

*From one side of a moonlit street the children of a happy family are heard singing.*

Under Heaven's starry towers  
Gently slumber lamb and kine.  
Gently close these eyes of ours,  
Lulled beneath the love divine.  
Draw the curtain, quench the flame ;  
Angels watch till morning light.  
Breathe one prayer in Mary's name.  
Then we sleep. To all good night.

*Here the wind shall blow pleasant old memories down the street, but shall wail in passing the square.*

### VIII

*It seemeth that one museth alone among rustling shrubbery.*

And here it is, that lay so long in ground,  
Thy marble bust, thou great Athenian soul.  
Thy words are on my vellum page ; and thou—

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Art thou not near, whatever lives of thee,  
Where newly found thy lineaments and lore  
Survive the years, grand polar star. Oh yet,  
Plato, thou'rt nigh. Come, trim the lamp with me,  
And talk of wisdom hidden long from fools.  
What thought moved once the brow men modeled  
here?

Ah, pour it forth till charmed by thee I feel  
Oblivion wrap my fallen age, and them,  
The priestly crowd, to whom I vowed but now  
Implicit faith in what I know a lie,  
Blaspheming nature. Let me lave my soul  
Free from the canting slime I wallowed in,  
With thee in pitying, calm disdain behold  
Man's world, this great kaleidoscope of creeds,  
Changing and childlike, laughable, terrible.

Should I have lied? One long revered by me,  
One filled with learning, warm with love of men,  
Lied not—and burns to-morrow. Mourned of none,  
Among the madmen, doomed and those who doom,  
A lonely martyr he for truth unchained  
And godlike doubt. Had I believed as he  
My death would raise the race, I might have died.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

But age on age the wise and good from cross  
And flame and gallows-tree have cried; and still  
The hoary fiend whom they an hour dethroned  
But donned the new deliverer's robes and reigned.  
And so I lied and live, and talk with you.

How beautiful is the night that welcomes you  
From that long sojourn in time's wreckage. Fair  
Gleam down the stars as on Pentelicus,  
When you by their soft torches did derive  
The mighty lesson years have kept so ill.  
You seem in age; those cheeks are guttered out  
By burning thought as tapers by their flame;  
Yet calm serenity is on that brow,  
As if your musings while you still were man  
Had clasped eternity in single hours.  
Your race did build the Parthenon, and there  
Held dual worship, where the crowd revered  
Athena, and your peers the beautiful.  
So I in dim cathedrals built by me,  
Behind mock saints to whom my mockery prays,  
Enthrone your ancient vision and revere.

Dread, dark Hereafter, word whose witching sound  
On siren isles has drawn deluded lands,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Wait unexpounded through our human night  
And nation's nonage; vex the world no more.  
Enough for me that thus, transcending time,  
I live at will in Plato's day, and view  
From peaks of thought far off millennial suns.  
He who imagines half has conquered death.  
Thou didst converse with me in Academe,  
Thou graven face; and thou and I this hour  
Feel dimly thoughts that kindred minds unborn  
May shape around our chiseled brows. All hail,  
Undying vision, more than mortal mood.  
That sound among the rustling leaves may be  
The step of Death; but let it. Thou and I—  
Have we not fathomed eternity to-night?

*The night wind moaneth in the shrubbery.*

I have blown by the groves of Ganges, I have blown  
by the mouths of Nile,  
By Balbec and great Palmyra where the gods were  
throned erewhile;  
But their names were unknown and their works over-  
thrown, and their priesthood dead;  
And the grape that grew wild on their ruin fed those  
whom they never fed.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And the same old joy of loving, and the same old  
hunger cry,  
And the waste of life's rich meaning lived on though  
the gods might die.

By the shores of eternity flying I have asked for what  
none would tell.

From the bounds of the infinite blown I but whisper  
a finite spell,

The spell of a world made happy, of a heart and a  
mind made free,

I have sung in men's ears for ages as I danced with  
the surging sea.

But the heroes who heard it are dead, and the sages  
who heard it are dumb;

And dark are the years behind me, and dim are the  
years to come.

## IX

*Here speaketh a voice as of a great queen at her  
chamber window.*

All day my woman's limbs wore armor, love.

All day my woman's tender soul has worn

The monarch's iron mood, and longed for night,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Whose dewy hands unarm the weary will.  
Only a clinging wife is she whose frown  
Defended realms at noon; and thou, my prince,  
Be lover, man, and husband now for me.  
The stars that chronicle the reigns of kings  
Are gazing down, and grave with burning pens  
Our deeds among their keen, enduring orbs.  
They write and tell us nothing; praise or blame  
Is there forevermore in angel eyes;  
Yet we cannot decipher it, nor know  
If praise or blame be there, that coming time  
May read on earth, and God in heaven now.

Whence fell this dark and dreadful melancholy  
On me, who rode with men against the Moor?  
Have I done evil? All our realms rejoice,  
Our great united empire, one in faith.  
“Who owns the region owns religion there”;  
Or schism and civil war would rend it. You,  
Glad Spain, win peace on earth, in heaven salvation.  
Perfumes of blossom rich on vine and tree,  
Or flower in cloister garden, bear the breath  
Of grateful people down the fragrant night.  
Only among the trill of happy tones,

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And gliding wave and lover's glad guitar,  
The nightingale keeps singing mournfully.  
Would he were still; our dread imperial power,  
Launching the force whose workings none may weigh,  
Can silence not that low, insistent tone.

The blessed night is calm and full of faith.  
The stars are altar-lamps; the trees bow down,  
And tell their rosaries in drops of dew.  
As mothers eye their sleeping babes, to-night  
I watch the land I love, and fold its arms  
Around the cross whereon the Saviour died;  
Even I, who made my land's religion pure.  
And thinking thus I was most glad, until,  
Like memories of a friend's forgotten prayer,  
That says it was but tells not what it was,  
I heard the nightingale as now it mourns.

To-morrow law must lay its iron hand  
Where love has failed. Oh Christ who cleansed the  
temple,  
Bring comfort to thy child, that loved too well  
Thy enemies, and saddening signed their doom.  
Throw guardian arms around me, husband, king,

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

Drive off the dreary mood that music woke.  
But now I thought a foot was on the grave  
Of that sweet fame and love from coming years  
That should be mine. I know 'twas but a dream.  
Embrace me, praise me, charm that mood away.  
Among the stellar fires Orion treads  
As he shall tread for æons yet, and hear  
The ages judge the irrevocable past.  
Why should I shudder? why be haunted now  
With prayer for ill-timed clemency refused?  
I should be glad as mother, wife, and queen,  
And Christian lady. Only sad, so sad,  
With grief so old yet never understood,  
Below my window sang the nightingale.

*The wind blows to the listener the song of the  
nightingale.*

I sang to the beautiful rose, and its petals grew wide  
to hear;  
But it learned not the song that I sang, though it  
thrilled that my music was near.  
I sang to the heart of a queen, and it opened to let  
me in.

## The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

I sang at the door of her thought, and it barred me  
out as a sin.

So I sing in the night of the ages alone till the dawn  
return;

And the beautiful women weep, but my meaning they  
never will learn.

## X

*Here shall come a sound as of guards before prison  
gates, and words as of monks conversing.*

That was a fearful scene, wild Indian form  
And foreign tree and quivering wind-blown fires.

Our brother died there burned by heathen, yea,  
By those to whom in love he bore the truth,  
As always that great errand ends on earth,  
A holy martyr. Through the flames he saw  
Angels descending, and the white-robed saints,  
Who bore an aureole for a kindred brow.

So pass to joy the blessed of the Lord.

Hark, peace. From those condemned unhallowed  
hymns

I hear, and prayer that never Mary willed.

## Poems of New England and Old Spain

For them already yonder angry dawn  
Brings wrath divine and Holy Church's doom.  
Long may they suffer for their heresy.

### *The night wind speaketh wearily.*

Out of the night I come, and into the night I go,  
For the dusky caravans move, and the mountains  
begin to glow.  
And the sun is so far from man he will laugh as he  
climbs the sky;  
And man is so far from man he will laugh while his  
brethren die.  
And the love-driven hates foam on to the goal that  
none yet discerns.  
Into the bosom of night the child of the night returns.















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